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Our Inept Intrigue

To the Editor of THE EAGLE:—

In the interests of not stampeding the American people to a point of no return in our relations with Cuba, I started my spelling-grammar feud with the editors of *The Eagle* ["Letters," Jan. 7, 10]. With the same interest in mind, may I call your attention to a thoughtful attitude on this question expressed recently in *The Nation*?

The issue of Jan. 14 points out that although the recent break in diplomatic relations into which we were goaded by Castro does give him certain short-term advantages, it also offers the new administration an opportunity to prepare for "a return to a new version of the Good Neighbor policy." Meanwhile, the way we approach the crisis with Cuba will have a strong bearing on our Latin American relations generally. *The Nation* therefore urges:

We should adopt a belated New Year's resolution and swear off further cloak-and-dagger operations in the Caribbean. We have had quite enough of "secret" air-strips which are the subject of international gossip and comment, of artfully staged rehearsals of "invasion armies" practicing in the gardens of Florida estates, of Teddy Roosevelt-style naval maneuvers, of inspired news stories which describe some of the more stupid of Batista's killers as "leaders" of an anti-Castro opposition.

And there are other hare-brained ventures of which the public knows nothing, or about which the little that is known can neither be confirmed nor clarified. When a top CIA official is quoted as having said of one such venture, "It will be a black day if we are found out" (see editorial, *The Nation*, Dec. 3), and the statement stands un-denied, the effect is to give the appearance of confirmation to Castro's wildest charges of planned armed invasion . . .

As a nation, we are not good at cloak-and-dagger activities, as events in Laos and the U2 incident should remind us. The fact that we are not adept does us credit as a people. Cloak-and-dagger operations do not comport well with traditional American values or with the national character. Our efforts to play the game have about them all the subtlety of "private eye" television scripts.

If it were a question—which fortunately it is not—of using the Marines or CIA as our main reliance in the Caribbean, we would unhesitatingly opt for the Marines. Happily, we have an opportunity, now, to recast American policies in a manner that should make it possible to dispense with both the Marines and the CIA as auxiliaries of the Department of State.

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